

February 15, 2002

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
BLM TO HOLD MEETINGS ON NEW ANDREWS/STEENS LAND USE PLAN

The U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) will be holding a series of open house meetings in late February and early March to enlist citizen help in identifying planning issues to address in a new land use plan for public lands in the Steens Mountain and adjacent areas. The Steens Mountain Cooperative Management and Protection Act of 2000 requires the agency to develop the plan within 4 years of the passage of the act to set long-term management direction for the area which lies within the Andrews Resource Area in the Burns District.

The Planning Area encompasses approximately 1,723,564 acres of public land and includes 40,000 acres of the adjacent Three Rivers Resource Area. The BLM will work closely with the Steens Mountain Advisory Council (SMAC), the Southeast Oregon Resource Advisory Council (SEORAC), other Federal and State agencies, local governments, tribes, and with the public, to collaboratively identify future management direction for the Planning Area.

Information gathered at the "scoping" meetings and through written comments will be used to pinpoint issues and develop planning criteria and alternatives for the Resource Management Plan (RMP) and associated Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

Public scoping meetings will be held at the following locations:
Burns, February 27, 2002...Old Camp Casino, 2205 W. Monroe
Frenchglen, March 4...2002 Frenchglen School gymnasium
Bend, March 6, 2002...Riverhouse Hotel/Resort, 3075 N. Hwy 97
Portland, March 7, 2002... Doubletree Portland Downtown, 310 S. W.

Lincoln

NOTE: All of the open house meetings will be held from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

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The formal scoping (public comment) period commences with publication of this notice and will end April 15, 2002. Comments on issues and planning criteria can also be submitted in writing to the address listed below by the end of the scoping period. A scoping brochure describing the RMP process will be mailed during the third week in February to all on the Burns District mailing list. The brochure will contain a response form for those who wish to remain on the mailing list. Early participation by all those interested is encouraged.

BLM staff will attend the scoping meetings to provide information, listen to citizen concerns and opinions, exchange ideas, and gather information pertinent to the RMP/EIS process. Written comments will be accepted throughout the comment period at the address shown below. In addition to the ongoing public participation process, additional opportunities for public participation will be provided through comment on the RMP/EIS alternatives and upon publication of the Draft RMP/EIS. People wishing to be added to the mailing list to receive future notifications or documents can contact the BLM Burns District Office at the address listed below or call the numbers at the end of this notice.

Written comments should be sent to: **Andrews/Steens Resource Management Plan, Bureau of Land Management, Burns District Office, 28910 Highway 20 West, Hines, Oregon 97738; Fax (541) 573-4411.**

Documents pertinent to the RMP/EIS process may be examined at the Burns District Office in Hines, Oregon. Comments, including names and street addresses of respondents, will be available for public review at the Burns District Office during regular business hours, 7:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays, and may be published as part of the EIS. Individual respondents may request confidentiality. Persons wishing to withhold their name or street address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act must state this prominently at the beginning of their written comment. Such requests will be honored to the extent allowed by law. All submissions from organizations and businesses, and

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from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses, will be available for public inspection in their entirety.

For further information and/or to be added to the Andrews/Steens RMP mailing list, contact Rhonda Karges, Telephone (541) 573-4433 or Gary Foulkes, Telephone (541) 573-4541 at the Burns BLM District Office.

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